The Ancestry of Loretta Josephine Jones

The parentage and ancestry of Loretta Josephine Jones is not a terribly obscure or difficult truth. But, there are enough data cleanliness issues and unfortunate events present that it warranted a careful narrative.

NOTE: In Oct 2018, I discovered that part of the probate for Joseph Henderson Jones was still extant in Watauga County, NC. It lists his children including Loretta. This clearly confirms the research presented below.

Her Parentage

Loretta's parentage must be traced in tandem with her brother Edmon Foster Jones. This is because neither of these children are ever shown with their father in the census records. But, having two names and two ages to trace makes it far more certain that we are not being led astray into a non-related Jones family.

We begin with the 1930 census. Loretta is listed as a sister in the household of E. F. Jones in Walker County, Texas. Loretta is 67 years old and was born in North Carolina; E. F. is 69 years old and was also born in North Carolina. (As a supplemental data point, in the 1940 census Loretta is listed as a sister-in-law in the household of Mary Jones, the widow of E. F. Jones.)

Loretta is also shown as a sister of Edmon Jones in the 1910 census in Walker County, Texas. Here she is 46 years old and born in North Carolina; Edmon is 49 years old and also born in North Carolina. (A 1920 census record could not be located for Loretta.)

If we now jump back to the 1870 census, we find a Josephien L. Jones (mis-transcribed in the index as Josephien S. Jones) in the household of William Miller in Jackson County, Tennessee, 8 years old, born in North Carolina. In this same household is Edmon F. Jones, 10 years old, born in North Carolina. Note that the 1940 census gives Loretta's name as "Loretta J." and the Pegoda Bible gives her name as "Loretta Josephine Jones" so this census record can certainly be our Loretta.

With only a slight variation in Loretta's age in 1910, these three records clearly show the same sibling pair. This information also matches oral family history which indicates the Burnett and Jones families came from Tennessee.

Notice in the 1870 census the other Jones individuals who appear to be siblings of Loretta and Edmon: Thomas L. (age 14, born in NC), Julie A. (age 12, born in NC), and Laura C. (age 11, born in NC). The wife in the household is Elisabeth Miller (age 39, born in NC). Unfortunately, a marriage record for Elisabeth and her husband William J. Miller does not exist, for otherwise we would know her prior surname. Nevertheless, the implication from the census record is that the Jones children are hers from a previous marriage, but this cannot be concluded certainly from this record alone.

Now, rewinding to the 1860 census, we find a Joseph H. Jones family in Watauga County, North Carolina with the following members: Elisabeth (age 27, born in NC, the implied wife), Mary J. (age 6 born in NC), Thomas L. (age 4, born in NC), Julia A. (age 2, born in NC), and Laura C. (age 1, born in NC). The three youngest children are perfect matches for the 1870 census record children above, down to middle initial and age. The implied mother Elizabeth is also a decent match.

I believe the 1860 and 1870 census records certainly tie our Loretta and Edmon to the Joseph H. Jones family.

What Happened to Her Father

Our Joseph H. Jones was the Joseph Henderson Jones who served in the Confederate Army between 12 Sep 1861 and 13 Dec 1862. He was a Private in Company B of the 37th North Carolina Infantry. Joseph enlisted at Boone, Watauga, North Carolina for one year. He was mustered into service (active duty) on 20 Nov 1861. He is present in camp in Apr 1862 but is listed as sick in the hospital in Richmond by Jun 1862. It does not appear he returned to service. He died on 13 Dec 1862 at the Charlottesville, Virginia hospital (where he had been transferred some 6 days earlier) of a brain abscess with intermittent fever and/or pneumonia (likely all of them with the pneumonia setting in as a secondary issue at the end).

All of this information comes from the compiled Civil War service record of Henderson J. Jones, 37th North Carolina Infantry. In the service record his name is given once as Jacob H. Jones, once as Joseph H. Jones, and many times as J. H. Jones. But, this is certainly our Joseph H. Jones give the name similarity and the location at which he joined - Watauga County, North Carolina where our Joseph H. Jones was living in 1860.

It is unclear how literally we should take the muster roll notes of Joseph being "sick." If he had been wounded in battle would different terminology have been used? It is hard to say. If I were asked to describe the most likely scenario leading to Joseph's death, it would be the following.

Given the nature of his illness (a brain abscess) and his youthful age, Joseph likely suffered a head injury. The Battle of Hanover Court House occurred on 27 May 1862 in Hanover County, Virginia just before the initial report of Joseph's hospitalization. Since his battle unit was engaged here and this closely fits the time of Joseph's "illness" I believe he sustained a head injury during this battle. He would succumb to his injuries some 6-7 months later.

No matter the actual circumstances, it is important to note the dates of Joseph's service. In a situation like this it is very likely he left home in Sep 1861 and never returned. This will have bearing on discussions below concerning Loretta's birth date.

About Her Mother

From the 1870 census record, we see that Loretta's mother Elizabeth remarried to William J. Miller after Joseph died. Elizabeth's maiden name is given on page 320 of a book called *A History of Watauga County, North Carolina* by John Preston Arthur (Everett Waddey Co., Richmond, 1915, available at archive.org). Elizabeth was the daughter of Jesse Hodges and Mary Clawson. She was born about 1832 in Ashe County, North Carolina and reportedly died on 16 Jun 1882 in Tennessee. Other than the cited book and census records, no other documentation of Elizabeth's parentage or vital statistics has been found.

Her Birth Year

Because of very unclean census and other data, some thought needs to be given to Loretta's birth year. Here are the basic data points:

• 1870 census: 8 years old	1861 or 1862
• 1880 census: 15 years old	1864 or 1865
• 1900 census: Jun 1871, 28 years old	1871 or 1872
• 1910 census: 46 years old	1863 or 1864
• 1930 census: 67 years old	1862 or 1863
• 1940 census: 75 years old	1864 or 1865
• Death certificate: born 1863, aged 81 years 9 mo. (from 02 Mar 1946)	1863 or 1864
• Grave marker:	1864
• Pegoda Bible:	1864

The 1900 census is obviously incorrect, but it is not clear how it should be corrected. The obvious choice is to assume things are just 10 years off: born Jun 1861 and 38 years old. But, then Loretta's birth date is too close to her older brother Edmon (b. 01 Dec 1860). Assuming Edmon's birth date is correct (which I believe it is due to very consistent data) and June is the correct birth month for Loretta, the lower bound for Loretta's birth year is 1862. I believe the 1900 census should read: born Jun 1862, 38 years old.

Most of the other data points indicate a birth year of 1863 or 1864, with a couple of 1865 items thrown in. But, we are neglecting an important hidden data point.

In the discussions above, we have established certainly that Loretta's father is Joseph Henderson Jones. He left home to fight in the Civil War in Sep 1861. He was hospitalized by Jun 1862 and died in Dec 1862. I believe he was absent from the home from Sep 1861 onward. If Loretta was conceived just before he left home, the latest she would have been born is Jun 1862. This would invalidate all of the above records except for two - the 1870 and 1930 censuses.

But, I believe this is the definitive piece of evidence. It appears Loretta was conceived in Sep 1861 just before her father left to fight in the Civil War and was born 9 months later in Jun 1862, coincidentally at the same time her father was first reported as hospitalized.

This indicates the 1870 census is correct if it was filled out perfectly according to its instructions (Loretta's age at last birthday on 23 Jul 1870 was 8 years old). The 1930 census is also correct (Loretta's age at last birthday on 05 May 1930 was 67 years old).

So, out of 10 data points there are 3 data points that agree perfectly. All of the other data points, including the Pegoda Bible and the death certificate, appear to be flawed, misremembered, misrecorded, or somehow miscomputed.

Her Birth Date

As difficult as it is to establish Loretta's birth year, it is even more difficult to establish her birth date. There are only two data points, neither of which appear to come directly from Loretta.

- Death certificate: 02 Jun
- Pegoda Bible: 24 Jun (quite possibly recorded after Loretta had died)

With only these two data points it is impossible to know or even conjecture which is correct.

Amazingly, the record date for four census records occur in and around these dates. Had Loretta's census data been anywhere near consistent for her birth year, it is possible these could have been used to decide between these two dates. But, unfortunately it is not possible to determine the complete set of mistakes in these records.

I have taken the 02 Jun date from the death certificate as being correct. We may never know if this is the correct choice or not.

Her Paternal Ancestors

Loretta's father Joseph Henderson Jones was born about 1825 in North Carolina. His parents were reportedly Joseph Dyke Jones and Mary M. Foster. Joseph D. Jones is said to have been born about 1777 in Orange County, Virginia and died about 1846 in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Mary Foster was reportedly born 18 Aug 1786 in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Joseph and Mary were married on 05 Dec 1814 in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Aside from a few census records and a marriage record, no documentation of the parentage of Joseph H. Jones or the vital statistics of his parents are known.

The parents of Joseph D. Jones were Morton Jones, Sr. and Frances "Frankey" Foster. The parents of Mary M. Foster were Joseph Foster, Jr. and Virginia Frances Jones. As is fairly obvious from the surname repetition, Joseph D. Jones and Mary M. Foster were double first cousins (their parents were a pair of Jones siblings that married a pair of Foster siblings).

Joseph Dyke Jones is connected to his father through his father's will which mentions multiple children. In addition, two of the children are also mentioned his Revolutionary War pension file (W7903). This firmly ties all of this family together.

As just noted, Morton was a Patriot of the American Revolution. He served four 3-month tours as a Private in the Capt. Joseph Spencer Company and a Sergeant in the Captain Garland Burnley Company, Virginia Continental Line. He was present at the Siege of Yorktown. His vital statistics, timeline of residences, and relationship to two sons are very well documented in his pension papers. Morton was born on 10 Aug 1747 in Wilkes County, North Carolina and died 08 Nov 1841 in Coffee County, Tennessee.

The immigrant Jones ancestor appears to be Hugh Jones (Morton's father) who was born in Wales in 1720. His wife was Elizabeth Morton who was born 01 Jan 1727 in Maryland.

Joseph Foster, Jr. was also a Patriot of the American Revolution. He served as a Private in the Thomas Bell Company (#4) of the Nathaniel Gist Virginia regiment for 3 years and was awarded Virginia bounty land warrant #4086 for 100 acres.

Unfortunately, insufficient documentation exists for us to file lineages to these Patriot ancestors with DAR or SAR.

Her Maternal Ancestors

Loretta's mother Elizabeth Hodges was the daughter of Jesse Hodges and Mary Clawson. Jesse was born about 1800 in Ashe County, North Carolina. He and his son Jack were murdered by Thomas Roberts in Johnson County, Tennessee in 1864. It has also been stated that they were murdered by "renegades in the Civil War" which could simply be giving color to the situation leading to the murders.

Mary Clawson was reportedly born 29 Mar 1802 in Ashe County, North Carolina and died in 1863 in Johnson County, Tennessee.

Much of this information comes from the John Preston Arthur book cited earlier.

Jesse Hodges was reportedly the son of Thomas Hodges and Betsey Cottrell. The rumor is that Thomas was a Tory during the American Revolution. Thomas is believed to be the immigrant Hodges ancestor.

written by Kevin P. Thompson, Oct 2018